DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 308 455 CG 021 797

AUTHOR Frith, V. Gaye; Yellen, Penny
TITLE Winnipeg Boys and Girls Clubs Inc. P.A.C.E. (Preparation and Access to Continuing Employment) Program.
PUB DATE 25 Jan 89
NOTE 12p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Consultation on Vocational Counselling (15th, Ottawa, Canada, January 24-26, 1989).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Career Counseling; *Employment Opportunities; *Employment Programs; Foreign Countries; High Risk Persons; Program Effectiveness; *Welfare Recipients; *Young Adults
IDENTIFIERS Canada

ABSTRACT

Winnipeg Boys and Girls Clubs Inc. is a private, voluntary, non-profit, human service group which provides disadvantaged children and youth of diverse social and cultural backgrounds with a safe and challenging environment and the experiences to acquire the skills which will enable them to become responsible and participating adults. Special projects funding has been used to develop a wide range of employment and pre-employment programs to address the need of young people who are functioning at well below an employment level. The Winnipeg group was chosen to develop and deliver the Preparation and Access to Continuing Employment Program (PACE) for youth under the Social Assistance Recipients Diversion Fund Program. The target group for the program are social assistance recipients ages 18 to 24. Participants are referred from social assistance case workers and screened for eligibility, training/employment history, and potential for benefit. The PACE program was designed to be competency-based, learner-centered and structured to provide as much flexibility as possible to meet individual needs. A high staff/participant ratio was used. Of the participants in the first program, 38 percent were employed full-time. With approximately 3 months left in the second program, 18 percent had been placed with employers, and 12 percent were seeking placements. (ABL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED308455

Winnipeg Boys and Girls Clubs Inc.

P.A.C.E. (Preparation and Access to Continuing Employment) Program

Presented at the Fifteenth National Consulation
on Vocational Counselling

Ottawa, Ontario
January 25, 1989

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

V. Gaye Frith

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Gaye Frith
Penny Yellen

Winnipeg Boys and Girls Clubs Inc.

P.A.C.E. (Preparation and Access to Continuing Employment) Program

Agency Information:

Winnipeg Boys and Girls Clubs Inc. is a private, voluntary, non-profit, human service which provides disadvantaged children and youth of diverse social and cultural backgrounds with a safe and challenging environment and the experiences to acquire the skills which will enable them to become responsible and participating adults.

To achieve this aim, the Agency offers a wide range of programs in such areas as employment and pre-employment, intercultural programming, independent living skills, and volunteer services in addition to the leisure time programs offered on a year-round basis in our three teen centres and their associated satellite operations.

The Agency has three major target groups: native, newcomer/visible minority, and at-risk mainstream children and youth ages six to twenty-four.

Winnipeg Boys and Girls Clubs Inc. has evolved from two teen intercept centres established in the late 1960's. In 1977, these two organizations amalgamated and were incorporated under the name "Winnipeg Youth Action Inc." In November of that year, a relationship was established with Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada and the name was changed to reflect our membership in that organization.

Rationale for Agency Employment Programs:

Over the past eight years, through our ongoing contact with youth in our centres, it has become obvious that employment is a major issue for our participants, many of whom are disadvantaged and at risk of being chronically unemployed or underemployed.

Every day, we encounter young people who are functioning at well below an employment level: many have left school early, lack appropriate employment role models, and have few if any marketable skills. In addition, they often do now know how to go about finding or keeping a job. Consequently, Winnipeg Boys and Girls Clubs Inc. has used special projects funding to develop a wide range of employment and pre-employment programs to address these very real needs.

Canada/Manitoba Agreement on Employability Enhancement for Social Assistance Recipients:

In 1986, the number of unemployed youth receiving social assistance in the City of Winnipeg had jumped from 40% of the total caseload in 1985 to almost 75%. In response to this alarming increase, a task group was formed to explore new approaches to employment and training programs for these youth. In recognition of the expertise Winnipeg Boys and Girls Clubs Inc. had developed in this area, the Agency was invited to participate.

This group recommended diverting funds from social assistance into programming that provided youth social assistance recipients with the structured training, support and employment experience required to become job-ready.

In February, 1987, the governments of Canada and Manitoba signed a two-year, $12 million joint funding agreement targeted toward three primary groups of assistance recipients: single parents, the disabled, and youth. Known officially as the Canada/Manitoba Agreement on Employability Enhancement for Social Assistance Recipients, this joint program is commonly referred to as the S.A.R. (Social Assistance Recipients) Diversion Fund Program.

Winnipeg Boys and Girls Clubs Inc. was one of seven community-based agencies chosen to develop and deliver the P.A.C.E. (Preparation and Access to Continuing Employment) Program for youth under the S.A.R. Diversion Program. The first agreement was for the period July, 1987 to April, 1988; a second program was approved for the period May, 1988 to March, 1989.

P.A.C.E. Program:

a) Target Group:

The P.A.C.E. Program has been designed for youth social assistance recipients ages 18 to 24. This group typically faces the following barriers to employment:

- Inadequate education and low levels of literacy
- Unstable family and personal relationships
- Inadequate standard of living
- A history of deviant behaviours and/or non-productive lifestyles and inadequate personal maintenance skills

- Low motivation
- Periods of short-term employment followed by lengthy periods of unemployment
- Low self-esteem

The Province of Manitoba surveyed S.A.R. Diversion Program participants in 1987/88. Among the participants in the youth stream, the discovered the following information:

- 33% had completed Grade 9 or less
- 37% were Native youth
- 30% had not worked at all in the previous year. Another 35% had worked only between 1 and 13 weeks in the twelve months prior to entry into the program.
- The average income in the twelve months before the program was $4,500, of which $2,500 came from social assistance.

The S.A.R. Diversion Programs (including the P.A.C.E. Program) is based on the assumption that many of these youth can become employable if they have access to intensive, structured support, training, and actual employment experiences.

b) Intake and Selection Process:

Since all participants had to be social assistance recipients, the first stage involved receiving referrals from both City and Provincial social assistance case workers. The Agency also developed and distributed an information package to other human service agencies having significant contact with the target group.

Paper screening was conducted on the basis of meeting eligibility requirements, past training/employment history, and potential for benefitting from the P.A.C.E. Program.

Selected individuals were then invited to a two-day Orientation Session which outlined the P.A.C.E. Program (including expectations of participants), skill assessment and aptitude testing, and individual interviews. Approximately 50% of those invited to the orientation session self-selected out. This left between 38 and 40 individuals from which the Agency selected 32 to participate in the

program; those not chosen were ranked and invited to fill vacancies during the first three weeks of the program.

Comparative profiles of the participants of the two P.A.C.E. Program have been attached as Appendix A.

c) Program Design:

Given the characteristics and diversity of the participants, the P.A.C.E. Program had to be learner-centred, competency-based, and structured to provide as much flexibility as possible to meet individual needs. Both the training and employment components were based on modules that could be adapted and aligned to the needs and pace of individual participants. The training is designed to enhance the participants' abilities to function successfully in the job environment.

The training (or in-house) component focussed on four primary areas: academic upgrading, independent living skills, employment preparation, and job skills training. Depending on individual progress, this component comprised the first ten to fifteen weeks of the program.

The academic upgrading consisted of literacy, Adult Basic Education (language arts and mathematics), and independent learning modules. Volunteer tutors were available to provide additional individual assistance. Placement tests were conducted twice, with many participants increasing their level of functioning by several grades. Some chose to enroll in correspondence courses offered through the Manitoba Department of Education leading towards a mature Grade 12 standing.

The independent living skills component focussed on practical skills to better enable them to function successfully both personally and in an employment context. As such, it included budgeting, banking, nutrition, health issues (including substance abuse), developing personal support networks, housing, interpersonal communication skills, managing stress, human rights and self-

assessment. Participants also were responsible for researching a topic of interest and preparing a presentation for the group.

The emphasis of the employment preparation component was on job search skills (including resources, resumes, and interview skills), employer expectations, employment legislation, and good employee behaviours. These areas were supplemented by field trips and guest speakers covering topics including telephone skills, office etiquette, and payroll.

By treating participants like employees rather than students, the staff were in a position to reinforce appropriate employment behaviours and to address performance problems in the context of an employer-employee situation.

The job skills training component was a new addition to the second P.A.C.E. Program. Depending on individual aptitude, interests, and employment aspirations, participants were enrolled in specific skills training through community colleges, school divisions, and government departments. Examples include typing, introductory accounting, pre-trade mathematics, software applications, and fork-lift operation. Participants attended these courses during their own time and received certification or credit upon successful completion.

Following completion of the in-house component, participants were placed in entry-level positions with employers. In addition to providing participants with practical employment experience, these placements assist employers to create jobs for these youth by subsidizing the training costs.

P.A.C.E. Program staff and the participants themselves conducted job searches to find appropriate placements. Contractual agreements were signed with co-operating employers who hired the participant upon commencement of the placement. A subsidy of 50% of minimum wage and benefits was provided directly to the employer.

Placements varied according to individual skill and interests and to availability. Throughout, however, staff have focussed on placements that will provide stability and room for growth; co-operating employers agree to maintain the employee on staff provided that his/her performance is acceptable. To date, co-operating employers have included a bank, offices of service industries, construction firms, light industry and manufacturing businesses, retailers, and fast food outlets.

Throughout the placement, P.A.C.E. Program staff liaise with both the participant and the employer to monitor progress and to provide assistance if problems should arise.

As indicated previously, many of the participants enter the program experiencing a wide range of social and personal problems, particularly in terms of relationships, alcohol abuse, low self-esteem, and legal difficulties. As participants grow to trust the staff, these problems are disclosed. Providing individual support and counselling to help them deal with these issues is crucial to the success of the participants. In some instances, staff provide assistance by listening and offering advice; others require referral to appropriate community resources including counselling services.

Unfortunately, there are some individuals whose personal problems are so severe that they are simply unable to function successfully within the program. In such cases, staff attempt to work with the participant to reach a decision about his/her continued participation. If a decision to terminate is made, every effort is made to ensure the individual is connected to other services and programs to better meet specific needs. Some, however, simply withdraw and the cycle begins again.

d) Staffing:

The high level of individual support required by the participants necessitates a high staff/participant ratio. Therefore, the following staffing configuration was developed for the second P.A.C.E. Program: 1 Co-ordinator, 1 Employment Preparation-

Independent Living Skills Coach, 1 Academic Teacher (on contract for the in-house component), and 2 Program Assistants to provide support to the professional staff and participants.

Outcomes:

38% of the participants completed the first P.A.C.E. Program in March, 1988 and were employed full-time; another 18% left the program early for other training programs or employment. 44% did not complete the program and were either unemployed or could not be traced.

Six months after the end of the program, however, only 3 out of a total of 34 participants were back on social assistance.

To date, 18% of the participants in the second P.A.C.E. Program have been placed with employers and another 12% are actively seeking placements. 23% have left the program for other employment and further training. 47% resigned or were terminated; of these, 3 left due to pregnancy and another due to illness.

The difference in placement rates between is largely the result of the significant differences in the participants as illustrated in Appendix A. The second group had much lower academic levels (65% had completed Grade 10 or less compared to 25% in the first group), and more than twice as many of the second group were married or in common-law relationships (35% compared to 16% in P.A.C.E. I). The latter is particularly significant given the exceptionally high instance of severe problems with partners that led to early withdrawal from the program.

The Province of Manitoba conducted a follow-up survey with S.A.R. Diversion Program participants three months after completion of the first cycle of programs. They found that 44% of the youth stream completed their programs, compared to a rate of 61% overall (single parents, disabled, and youth). This would appear to reflect the overwhelming personal difficulties and barriers affecting this very high-risk group.

Among those who completed the youth stream programs, 22% were employed full-time, 38% were employed part-time, and 15% had gone on to other education and training programs. Only 25% were unemployed but looking for work.

Corresponding figures are unavailable for non-completers in the youth stream. We do know, however, that when all streams are taken into consideration, 18% of non-completers were employed full-time, 8% part-time, 17% in other education and training programs, 30% were unemployed and looking for work, and 27% were unemployed and not looking for work.

76% of youth stream completers reported employment income during the three months after their programs ended (compared to a rate of 79% overall). Even among non-completers, there was a positive--though lower--impact: 43% reported receiving income from employment during the same period. Given that 30% had not worked at all during the twelve months before participating in the S.A.R. Programs, this indicates a significant improvement. Further research to determine long-term results is now being conducted.

Further information about the P.A.C.E. Program and other Agency programs and services is available by contacting Winnipeg Boys and Girls Clubs Inc., 460 Selkirk Avenue, Winnipeg, MB (204) 582-2321.

Comparative Participant Profiles

	P.A.C.E. I	P.A.C.E.II
Sex:		
Male	41 %	62 %
Female	59 %	38 %
Ethnicity		
Native	37 %	47 %
Other	63 %	53 %
Marital Status		
Single	75 %	50 %
Married/common law	16 %	35 %
Data missing	9%	15 %
Grade Completed		
Grade 10 & under	25 %	65 %
Grade 11 or more	75 %	35 %

Comparative Results

P.A.C.E. I

Completed Program, Employed Full-Time	38 %
Left Early for Other Employment & Training	18 %
Left Early, Unemployed or Unknown	44 %

Six months after the end of the program only 3 out of 34 participants were receiving Social Assistance

P.A.C.E. II

To January 23, 1989

Placed with Employers	18 %
Looking for Placement	12 %
Left Early for Other Employment & Training	23 %
Resigned or Terminated	47 %